
GOVERNOR'S VETO MESSAGE

April 22, 2021

To the Honorable Members of the Assembly:

I am vetoing Assembly Bill 240 in its entirety.

This bill, as amended, clarifies the Department of Military Affairs' statutory responsibilities relating to the statewide interoperable communications system and allocates federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) funds to develop the system. The bill also allocates ARPA funds to Next Generation 9-1-1 to develop an emergency services Internet Protocol and a geographic information systems database and provides funding to a hospital in Eau Claire to expand the number of psychiatric beds. I am vetoing this bill because I have several objections.

I object because allocating funds as directed under this bill is not expressly authorized under ARPA and it may not be an allowable use of this federal funding. While final guidance by the federal government has not yet been issued on the use of these funds, the bill's allocation to uses that may be entirely or partially prohibited by the federal government means that the state could end up having to repay some portion of the bill's expenditures to the federal government. This is an unnecessary risk.

I also object to the bill because it limits the ability to use federal recovery funds with the flexibility necessary to confront the variety of challenges posed by recovery from the COVID-19 global pandemic and respond to Wisconsin's changing needs over the course of the pandemic and our recovery. In Wisconsin, the role of the Governor to oversee use of federal funds under Section 16.54 of the Wisconsin Statutes is clearly established and has been in place for decades, a fact that was confirmed by legislative leadership in a letter they sent to me in April 2020.

In lieu of this bill, I will continue to utilize the authority provided to the Governor under Section 16.54 of the Wisconsin Statutes to oversee the use of federal funds, and I will allocate these funds in a manner that is transparent and consistent with both Wisconsin's needs and federal law.

Respectfully submitted,
TONY EVERS
Governor